THE FORTIETH DOOR

By Mary Hastings Bradley

STNOPSIS.

Jack Ryder, a young American, is doing some ex-carating in Earns and is induced by Jinny Jeffrice, carating in Earns and is induced by Jinny Jeffrice, a pretty American tourist he has known, to attend a pretty American tourist he has known, to attend a pretty American tourist he has known, to attend con-misted ball at her hotel. He obtains a Scotch coa-misted ball at her hotel, He obtains a Scotch coa-misted ball at her hotel, and at McLean, an attaché of inne tende produced and the second of the second of the English government, and at McLean, an attaché of time second of the second of the second of the second of the desert fifteen years before. The man was re-ordered fifteen years before a the party left now storr of a rears before. The man was re-desert fifteen years before. The man was re-desert fifteen years before the man was re-ted dead, and a wife and baby girl were left; now ted dead, and a wife and baby girl were left; now ted dead, and a wife and baby girl were left; now ted dead, and a wife and baby girl were left; now ted dead, and a wife and baby girl were left; now ted dead, and a wife and baby girl were left; now ted dead, and a wife and baby girl were left; now ted dead, and a wife and baby girl were left; now ted dead, and a wife and baby girl were left; now ted dead, and a wife and baby girl were left; now ted dead, and a wife and baby girl were left; now ted dead, and a wife and baby girl were left; now ted dead, and a wife and baby girl were left; now ted dead, and a wife and baby girl were left; now ted dead, and a wife and baby girl were left; now ted dead, and a wife and ted dead, and ted dea the story of a years before. The man was rethe desert fifteen years before. The man was rethe desert fifteen as wife and baby girl were left; nowbe telephone as a state makes it suddenly imthe laberiance of an estate makes it suddenly imthe laberiance of an estate makes it suddenly imthe laberiance of the laber as a suddenly imform frenchman curiously mounted. At the ball
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her identity. He follows as she slips away and finds
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should be form ruin. Ryder sees Aimée again, and
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when the lames and returns to treacue which convinces
when the lames and strip that Aimée is his own daughter,
and surprised in his love making by Jack, who,
there is surprised in his love making by Jack, who,
there is deviced to the castle waits. A Turkand buried alleve in the castle waits. A Turkister, is surprised in his love making by Jack, who, in turn, is overpowered by Hamid's slave, made prisect, and buried allve in the castle waits. A Turkoner, and buried allve in the castle waits. A Turkoner, and the disconfers to help him reactive Almée, and then disconfers to American by making passionate love to cets the American by making passionate love to him. Jack shows his indifference to her advances.

ELEVENTH INSTALLMENT. THE BLIND GODDESS.

E saw the flame in Aziza's eyes. He saw the stiffening of her defiance, of half incredulous affront. Then, her form drawn up, her bared arms outflung, her vivid, painted, furious face challenging him. "I am not beautiful—like Aimée? " she said in a voice of venom. And in the English, for double measure, "You not like me-no?"

"You are beautiful and I do like you," Ryder combated, feeling a bungling fool. And then went on to thrust into that half second of suspended fury a faint breath of appearing. "But-don't you see-it's my duty-" "You go?" she said clearly.

Even in that moment he had a sharp prescience of the unwisdom of his rejection. A cold calculator of chance and probabilities would have reckoned that a half hour here would have been a wiser investment of his mortal moments than any virtuous plunge into single hearted duty.

But Ryder did not calculate. He could not, with Aimée under that beast's hand. His heart and soul were possessed with her danger, and his heart and soul carried his body instinctively back from the dancing girl's advance, and he whispered: "I must go. There is no time

She flung back her flery hued head with a gesture of intolerable rage. Her eyes were lightnings.

"Dog of a Christian!" she said chokingly, and flew to the doors.

Back she thrust the heavy hangings, turning a quick key in the lock and wrenching the door wide. And before Ryder could understand, before he could bring himself to realize that she was not simply violently expelling him from her room, she gave a shrick that rang wildly down the long unseen

At the top of her lungs, with one hand out to thrust him back or cling to him if he attempted to pass, she shricked again and

Instantly there came a running of feet.

When Hamdi Bey had taken Aimée back to her apartments he pulled sharply upon a bell cord. In a few moments the slave woman Fatima made her appearance, no kindly eyed old crone like Miriam, but a sallow, furlive faced creature with an old disfiguring scar across a cheek.

The general pointed to the wet and fainting girl huddling weakly upon the divan.

"Your new mistress has met with an accilent out boating-a curse upon me for gratilying forbidden caprice!" he said orisply. "Be silent of this and array her quickly in

Very hurriedly he took himself and his wet condition away. He was furious through and through. What a night-what a wedding night! Scandal and frustration-a bride with a desperate lover-a bride who herself drew evolvers and threatened!

It was beyond any old tale of the palace. For less girls had had his father's dagger driven through their hearts-his grandfather, at a mere whisper from a eunuch, had given his favorite to the lion. The whisper was found incorrect at a later-toc late-date, and the cunuch had furnished the lion another

His modern leniency in this case would have outraged his ancestors.

But it was not in the bey's nature to deal the finishing stroke to anything so soft and lovely as Aimée. He had no intention of depriving himself of her. If she were red with guilt he would feign belief in her to eave his face until his infatuation was grati-

But actually he did not believe in any great guilt of hers. Tewfick Pasha, for all his indulgent modernity, would keep too Rrict a harem for that. What he rather believed had happened was that the young American-now so happily immured in his masonry-had become aware of the girl through the story of her French father, and In that connection had struck up the clandesthe and romantic correspondence which had led to their mutual infatuation and his des-

Perate venture there that afternoon. The young man had been dealt with-and the thought of the very summary and com-

setent way he had been dealt with drew the fangs from the bite of that night's invasion. His fury felt southingly glutted.

He had been a match for them both. If a recalled his own subtlety and agilling with a tenuine annie as lie bachanged his Cripping uniform for more informal trousers and a house cont. He had taught that young man a lesson—a final and ultimate lesson. And he was beginning to teach one to that girl. Before he was done with her-

He felt for her a mingled passion for her beauty and a lust for conquest of her resistant spirit that fed every base and cruel instinct of his nature.

A find-a rare find-even with her circumvented lover! He would have his sport with her. But though he promised this to himself with feline relish, apprehension and chagrin were still working.

The fond fatuity with which he had welcomed and starry eyed little creature that been rudely overthrown. And his pride smarted at the idea of the whispers that might echo and reëcho through his palace. He was too wise an old hand to flatter himself that it would preserve its bland and silent unawareness of this night.

So far, he believed, he had been unobserved. In Yussuf's silence he had absolute confidence. But of course there were a hundred other chances-some spying, bystairs eye, some curlous, straining ear.

And now this matter of the boating mishap-he cursed himself, now as he combed up his fair mustaches and settled a scarlet fez upon his thinned thatch of graying bair, cursed himself roundly for his malicious resort to that old oubliette. Anything else would have done to frighten and overwhelm her, and yet he had gratified his dramatic itch-and now had paid for it with that idiotic story of the boating expedition.

He had reason to trust Fatima-there was history behind the old sword scar upon her cheek, and he had a hold over her through her ambition for a son. But Fatima was a woman. And she-or some other who would see that drenched satin-would be curious of

And of course they could find out from the

It occurred to him to go and see the boatman and order him away, so that afterward the man could say he had been sent off duty. and the story of a nocturnal river trip would not appear too incredible. It was a small concession to stop gossip's mouth.

So, drawing on a swinging military cloak, the general stole down through the stair of the water entrance into the lower hall, where the pale light gleamed through the cross barred iron of the gate and the gatekeeper slept like a log in his muffling cloak.

The soundness of that slumber-loudly attested by the fumes of wine-afforded the general a profound pleasure. He took the man's keys softly, and went to the gate; it afforded him less pleasure to observe that the gate was unlocked, but he put this down to the keeper's muddleheadedness.

Carefully he turned the lock and pocketed the keys-for a lesson to the man's overdeep sleep in the morning and to attest his own presence there that night, then he went back and brought out an oar, which he placed conspicuously beside the smallest boat, drawn up just within the gates

He was afraid to alter the boat's position lest the noise should prove too wakening, but he considered he had laid an artistic foundation for his story, and with a gratifying sense of triumph he mounted the stairs.

He was not conscious of fatigue. He had always been a wiry, indefatigable person, and the alarms and emotions of this night had cleared his head of its wines and drowsiness. He felt the sense of tense, high strung power element of danger.

Youth! He snapped his fingers at it. Youth was buried in his masonry-and helpless in its shuttered room. Power was master-

But his elation ebbed as he crossed again that long drawing room, with its faded flowers about the marriage throne, and its abandoned table with its cloth askew, its crystal disarrayed, its candles gutted and spent.

The memory of that insolent moment when a man's hand had gripped him, had whirled him from Aimée-when a man's voice and gun had threatened him-that memory was too overpowering for even his triumph over the invader to lay wholly its smart of outrage.

He felt again the tightening of his nerves. like quivering wires, as he crossed the violated reception room and entered the boudoir. It was empty, but on the divan the flickering candle light revealed the damp, spreading stain where Aimée's drenched satins had

He thrust aside a hanging and pushed open

Aimée herself, in a gay little French boudoir robe of jade and citron, sat huddled in a chair like a mute, terrified child, in the hands of her dresser, who was shaking out the long. damp hair and fanning it with a peacock fan.

At the bey's entrance Fatima suspended the fanning, but with easy familiarity exhibited the long ringlets.

Curtly the bey nodded, and gestured in dismissal; the woman laid down her fan and with a last slant eyed look at that strangely still new mistress she went noiselessly out a

With an air of negligent assurance Hamdi Bey gazed about the room and yawned. "Truly a fatiguing evening," he remarked in his dry, sardonic voice. "But you look so untouched! What a thing is radiant youth"

He sauntered over to her, who drew a little closer together at his approach, and lifted one of the long, dark curls that the serving woman had exhibited.

" The ring ets of loveliness!" he murmured. "You know the old saying of the Saul? 'The

ringlets of the lovely are a chain on the feet of reason and a snare for the bird of wisdom." How long ago he said it-and how true today! Yet such a charming chain! Suppose, then, I forgive you, little one, since sages have forgiven beauty before?"

She was silent, her eyes fixed on him with the silent terror with which a trapped bird sees its captor, in their bright darkness the same mute apprehension, the same filming

Ryder was dead, she thought. This cruel, incensed old madman had killed him, for all his oaths. Somewhere beneath those ancient stones he was lying drowned and dead. a strange, pitiable addition to the dark secrets of those grim walls.

He had died for her sake, and all that she asked now of life, she thought in the utter agony of her youth, was death. And very quickly.

"I am so soft hearted," he sighed, still with that ringlet in his lifted hand, his hand which wanted palpably to settle upon her and yet was withheld by some strange inhibition of those fixed, helpless eyes. " Who knows-perhaps I may forgive you yet? You might persuade me."

"He is dead," she said shiveringly

"Dead? He? Ah, the invader, the intruder, the young man who wanted you for a family in France." The bey laughed gratingly. "No, I assure you he is not dead-I have not harmed a hair of his head. He is alive-only not with quite the widest range of liberty-"

He broke off to laugh again. "Ah, you disbelieve?" he said politely. "Shall I send. then, for some proof-an ear, perhaps, or a little finger, still very warm and bleeding, to convince you? In five minutes it will be

Then terror stirred again in her frozen heart. If Ryder were alive and still in this man's power-

"You are horrible," she said to him in a voice that was suddenly clear and unshaken. "What is it you want of me-fear and hate -and utter loathing?"

Her unexpected spirit was briefly disconcerting. The Turk looked down upon her in arrested frony and then he smiled beneath his mustaches and bent nearer with kin-

"Not at all-nothing at all like that, little dove with talons. I want sweetness and repentance-and submission. And---

"You have a strange way to win them," she said desperately.

"You have taken a strange way with me. my love. Little did I foresee, when I escorted you up the stairs this morning---" He broke off. "There are men." he reminded her, "who would not consider a cold bath as a complete recompense for your bridal

She was silent

"But I," he murmured, "I am soft hearted." He dropped on one knee before her and tried to smile into her averted face. "I can never resist a charming penitent. I assure you I am pliability itself in delicate fingers-although iron and steel to a threatening hand. If you should woo me sweetly, little one-"

She could not overcome and she could not hide from his mocking eyes the sick shrinking that drew her back from his least touch. But she did fight down the wild hysteria of her repugnance so that her voice was not the trembling gasp it wanted to be.

"How can I know what you are?" she told him. "You mock me-you threaten to torture that man-it would be folly not to think that you are deceiving me. If you would only prove to me so that I could be-

"If you would not prove to me so I could believe! Prove that you are mine-and not that infidel's. Prove that you bring me a wife's devotion-not a wanton's indifference." He caught her cold hands trying to draw her forward to him. "Prove that you only pity him," he whispered, "but that your love will be mine."

She felt as if a serpent clasped her. And yet, if that were the only way to win Ryder's safety-if it were possible for her sickened senses to allay this madman's suspicions and undermine his revenge-

Quiveringly she thought that to save Ryder she would go through fire.

But the hideous, mocking uncertainties!

Her utter helplessness-her lost deference. It was not a sudden sound that broke in upon them but rather the perception of many sounds, half heard, but gaining upon their consciousness Running feet-a stiffed voice-something faint and shrill.

Aimée sprang to her feet; the general rose with her and turned his head inquiringly in the direction. Then he jerked open the door through which Fatima had disappeared, it led to a dark service corridor and small anteroom, from whose hed the attendant was absent. An outer door was ajar.

No need to question the sounds now. Faint, but plercingly shrill shricks were sounding from above, while the foosteps were racing, some down some up.

The bey flung shut the door behind him and hurried towards the confusion.

Ryder had stood stock still with amazement when the girl began to scream. She had gone mad, he thought for an instant, in masculine bewilderment, and then her madness revealed its treacherous cunning, for she began crying wildly for tielp against an invader, an inficel, a dog of a Christian who had stolen

She had chucked him to the lions, Ryder perceived; one furious flash of lightning lealousy and oriental anger had overthrown. in that wild and lawless land, every other design for him for which she had risked so much.

He had scorned her. He had flouted her caprice. He had dared to refuse the languors of those dangerous eyes.

The hurrying footsteps appeared to him the tread of a legion in action, and he had no desire to rush out upon the oncomers; he had, indeed, distinct doubts of his ruthless ability to pass that supple, clawing, incensed creature at the door.

He whirled and made a bolt for the window, striking at the fastened grill. He heard the snapping of wooden bolts and the splintering of wood and out through the hole he climbed to a precipitous, headlong flight that fairly felt the clutching hands

He had meant to make a jump for it. A

three story plunge into the Nile appeared a gentle exercise compared with the alternative within the palace, but in the very act of releasing his hold he changed his Quicker than he had ever moved before in any vicissitude of his lithe and agile

crouching back from sight upon the jutting top of the window, he sent his coat sailing violently through space. He dared not look over for its descent upon the water, for other heads were peering from below, and he could hear an ex-

youth, he clambered up, not down, and

Evidently they were hurrying down to the water gate. Swiftly he utilized this misdirection for his own ends.

cited outburst of speech that broke sharply

The roofs. That was the refuge to make for. Flat, long reaching roofs, from which one could climb off into a well or a palm or a wide street.

He had only a story to ascend and he made it in record time, fearful that the searchers whom he heard now launching a boat below would turn their eyes skyward.

But he gained the top without an outery being raised and found himself upon the roof where the ladies of the harem took their air unseen of any save the blind eyes of the muezzin in the sultan's mosque upon the hill. There were divans and a little taboret or two and a framework where an awning could be raised against the sun.

There was also a trap door. And here tempestuously he changed his mind again. He abandoned the goal of outer walls and chances of escape. He wrenched violently at that trap door. It was bolted, but the bolt was an ancient one and gave at his furious exertions, letting him down into a narrow spiral staircase between walls.

Down he plunged in haste, before some confused searcher should dash up. It was no place to meet an opposing force. Nor was the corridor in which he found himself

It was black and baffling as a labyrinth, with unexpected turnings, and he kept gingerly close to the wall with one hand clutching a bit of iron which he had taken into his possession and his pocket when Aziza had led him out of the underground walls-the very bit of pointed iron it was with which the volatile creature had ef-

fected his rescue. He considered it an invaluable souvenir. and twice. In his nervous apprehension, he

almost brought it down upon shadows. Direction he judged vaguely by the screaming, which was still going on at a tremendous rate-evidently the girl had gone off into genuine hysterics or else she had determined not to leave her agitation at the intrusion in any manner of question. No doubt the outcries were a relief to her mingled emotions -remorse at her impetuousity and chagrin at her thwarted plans might conceivably be now among those emotions-and since the vicinity of those shrieks must be a gathering place to be avoided by him, he stole on, down the upper hall, and finding a stair,

he went down for two continuous flights. Aimée's rooms, he knew, had been upon the water, and recalling the general direction of those two lighted windows that he had seen so recently from without, his excavator's instinct led him on. Once he saw the flitting figure of a turbaned woman in time to draw back into a heaven sent niche, and again he flattened into a soundless shadow against the wall as two young serving girls ran by on slippered feet, their anklets tinkling, chattering to each other in de-

lighted excitement. And then the stealthy opening of a doorit was the very door by which Yussuf had precipitated himself upon the struggle at the supper table some age-long hours ago -gave him a glimpse into the far glooms of the reception room, where its long side of mashrubiyeh windows revealed now between its fretwork tiny chinks of a paling sky.

He could make out the dark draped marriage throne and the parlor of the disordered cloth upon the abandoned table below, and behind the table the dark draperies of the remaining portiere before the doorway into the boudoir where he had hidden himself and into which he had last seen Aimée

At the other end of the great room were the entrance stairs to the harem, and there, he imagined, a watchman was stationed, or else stout bolts and bars were guarding the aituation. There remained an arch doorway into other formal rooms through which he had seen Almée and the guests disappear for the wedding supper, and that way led, he surmised, down into the service quarters. A sorry choice of exits! He could form no plan in advance but trust blindly to the amazing chances of adventure. And first, before he rushed for escape, there was Almée to find.

Yet for all the mad hazard of the situation he was elated with life. He felt as if he had never fully lived until now, when every breath was informed with the sharp prescience of danger. He was at once cool and exultant, wary yet reckless, with the joyous recklessness of utter desperation.

With scoutlike care he surveyed the draw ing room; it appeared deserted, but as he watched his tense nerves could see the shadows forming, taking furtive, crouching shape and then dissolving harmlessly into a rug, a chair, or a stirring drapery. His eyes grown used to the dimness, he identified the mantle upon the floor in which he had come and which he had extended to Aimée in that brief moment of fatuous triumph, and beyond it, across a chair, was the portiere which the black had torn down from the doorway to wrap about Ryder's helpless form as he had carried him down to living death.

That mantle, he thought, might yet be useful, and he stole forward and recovered it, but, as he straightened, another shadow darted out from the boudoir door and silhouetted for an instant against the lighted room he saw a figure in a long, swinging military cloak.

Discovery was inevitable and Ryder made a swift plunge to take the cloaked figure by surprise, but even as one hand shot out and gripped the throat while the other held his threatening iron aloft, his clutch relaxed, his arm fell nervously at his side.

For from the figure had come the broken gasp of a soft voice, and the face unturned to his was a pale oval under dark, disordered hair.

"Aimée!" he breathed in exultant, still

half incredulous joy. "Aimée! Did I hurt "O, no, no!" came Aimée's shaken voice.

"O, you are safe!" He felt her trembling in his clasp and he swept her close to him. For one breathless instant they clung together, in a sharp, passionate gladness which blurred every sense of dread or danger. They were safe-they were together-and for the moment it was enough. Every obstacle was surmounted, every terror conquered.

They clung, obliviously, like children, her pale face against his shoulder, her hair brushing his lips, her wild heartbeats throbbing against his own.

Then the girl, remembering, lifted her head.

"Quick-we must go," she whispered, "For

He followed her frightened, backward glance at the boudoir door and suddenly saw its cracks and keyhole strangely radiant

"He left me to go to those screams," she was saying rapidly. "I tried to run that way-and found that woman coming back. And I told her to wait-in her own roomand I slipped back in there-and suddenly it came to me to thrust the candle about. I thought I would run out and if I met any one I would call, 'Fire,' and say the general was burning and perhaps in the con-

The terrible desperation of her both stirred and wrung him. She was so little, so helpless, so trembling in his clasp, so made for love and tenderness. And to think of her in such fear and horror that she went thrusting reckless candles into her hangings, sotting a palace on fire in the blind fury for

To such work had this night brought her. This night, and three men-for he and the craven Tewfick and the fanatic bey were all linked in this night's work. Yes, and another man-and he thought swiftly, in a lightning flash of wonder, how little that Paul Delcassé had known when he set his eager face toward the old world, with his wife and baby with him, that he was setting his feet into such a web; that his wife would die, languishing in a pasha's harem, and his little daughter would one night be flying in mad terror from the cruel beast the weak pasha had sold her to!

And how little, for that matter, he had known when he had set his own face toward those same sands what secrets he would discover there and what forbidden ways his

heart would know. These thoughts all went through him like one thought, in some clear, remote background of his mind, while he was swiftly drawing on the military cloak she gave him and wrapping her in the black mantle. There was a veil on the mantle's hood that she could fling across her face when she wished, but Ryder had no fez to complete the deceptive outline of his masquerade. He must trust to the dark and to the concealment of the high, military collar of

"Do you know a way?" he whispered, and at her shaken head, "The water gate," he said, thinking swiftly

There would be a crowd now about the gate, but if they could only manage to gain those cellars and hide somewhere they could steal out later upon that waterman.

It seemed the most feasible of all the desperate plans. The roof might be a trap. The harem entrance led into a garden and the garden was guarded by In impassable wall. But If he could only get to the river he knew that he was a strong enough swim-

mer to save Aimée, or he might even ten rorize the watchman into furnishing a boat. She did not question, but guided him swiftly through the arch that led down into the banqueting hall.

Keeping Aimée a few steps behind him he went down the soft carpet and peered out at the bottom towards the water gate. He saw no bars; the gate was open, and against the pale square of the water were the black silhouettes of the general and the gateman. both leaning out at some splashing in the

He knew a boy's reckless impulse to shove them both in. It was an unholy thought his better judgment rejected-unless driven to it-yet some prankish element in his roused recklessness would not have deplored the

If they looked about!

But they did not stir as, with Aimée's cold hand in his he made the tiptoed descent and slipped softly about the corner of the steps. Then, instead of going on down the hall to some hiding place in the rulns, he took a suddenly revealed, sharper turn into a narrow passage just beyond the stairs. It might lead to another gate, some service entrance, perhaps, it ran so straight and direct between its walls.

Intuitively that excavator's sense of his defined the direction. They were going parallel with the river, although a little way back from the water wall, and in the direction of the men's part of the palace, the

Bitterly he blamed himself for his lack of complete inspection that morning. To be sure he had told himself, then, as he strolled about the high garden walls and peered down the narrow lane on one side of the Nile backwaters, that he didn't need a map of the place for his arrival at an afternoon reception; he was simply going in and out, and clothes and speech were his only real concern.

He had even said to himself that he might not reveal himself to Aimée-if she did not discover him. He wanted merely to see her again, and be sure that she understood her own history-he had no notion of attempting any further relations with her. any resumption of their forbidden and dangerous acquaintance.

He recalled the selamlik vaguely as an irregular mass of buildings, and though the formal entrance was of course through the garden from the avenue, there was a narrow side street or lane leading back to the water's edge between this part of the palace and the next building, and very likely there was some entrance on that lane.

And it was true that had been the defiant and protesting surface of his thoughts, but deep within himself there had always been that hot, hidden spark, ready to kindle to a flame at her word, and with it the unowned,

secret longing that she would speak the word. And when she had called on him for help, when the trembling appeal had sprung past her stricken pride, and he had seen the terror in her soft, child's eyes, then the spark had struck its conflagration. He had become nothing but a hot, headstrong fury of

And he said to himself now that he might have known it was going to happen, and that if he had not been so concerned that morning about saving his face and preserving this fiction of indifference he would know a little more about the labyrinth they were poking about in-the little more that tips the scale between safety and destruc-

But he did not know and blind chance was his only goddess.

The passage had brought him to a wall and a narrow stairs, while another passage led off to the right, apparently to the forward regions of the place.

He took the stairs. He had had enough of underground regions when they did not lead to water gates, and the stairs promised nov-He wished he knew more about Turkish

palaces. He supposed they had a fairly consistent ground plan, but beyond a few main features of inner courts and halls he was culpably ignorant of their intentions. If it were an early Egyptian tomb or temple now! But then, perhaps, the Turks were more indefinite in their building and rebuilding.

At the head of the stairs a door stood half ajar. Through the crack he strained his eyes, but his anxious glance met only the darkness of utter night. Not a gleam of light And not a sound, except the far. hollow stamping of some stabled horse.

Softly he pushed the door open, and he and Aimée slipped within. The place, whatever it was, appeared deserted; a dark, bare, backstairs region-for he stumbled over a bucket-from which to the right he could just discern a hall leading into the forward part of the palace, wanly lighted some distance on, with the pale flicker of an old

They seemed to be at the end of the hall. and the darker shadows in the walls about them appeared to be a number of doors-

closed, so his groping hands informed him. What was behind those doors? Not a crack of light came from them; that was one comfort. The rooms, kitchen, service, storerooms, or whatever they were appeared in the same blackness and oblivion. But any door might open on a roomful of sleeping

gardeners and grooms. Life and more than life hung on the blind

[To be continued]

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